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# The 1984 Playboy interview

72–91 minutes

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PLAYBOY: Although we hope to cover a lot of ground, let's start with the reason you're in the limelight again. You've just finished a movie, Give My Regards to Broad Street. You wrote it and play a leading role. Why this movie now?

Paul: *I guess the ultimate luxury professionally is to be able to change your direction, to work in another medium. It's what a lot of people would like to be able to do. It has also given me a change to see professional actors at work, and now I can tell the acting profession, "Nobody need worry about me; there's no danger from me." Laughs Still, it's been great fun and I've learned a lot. It's a good little film, a nice evening out. I only regret I didn't write a completely new score.*

LINDA: *But he's written a great theme song for it. The music is all live, and Paul's had a chance to work with great musicians again. He's started coming home happy again, fulfilled. Paul is a perfectionist. He hasn't been happy, he hasn't had a chance to work with the best since the old days.*

PLAYBOY: Since the Beatles.

LINDA: *Yes.*

Paul nods.

PLAYBOY: Paul, it's been nearly four years since John Lennon died and you haven't really talked about your partnership and what his death meant to you. Can you talk about it now?

PAUL: *It's… it's just too difficult… very feel that if I said anything about John, I would have to sit here for five days and say it all. Or I don't want to say anything.*

LINDA: *I'm like that.*

PAUL: *I know George and Ringo can't really talk about it.*

PLAYBOY: How did you hear of John's death? What was your first reaction?

PAUL: *My manager rang me early in the morning. Linda was taking the kids to school.*

LINDA: *I had driven the kids to school and I'd just come back in. Paul's face, ugh, it was horrible–even now, when I think of it…*

PAUL: *A bit grotty.*

LINDA: *I knew something had happened…*

PAUL: *It was just too crazy. We just said what everyone said; it was all blurred. It was the same as the Kennedy thing. The same horrific moment, you know. You couldn't take it in. I Can't.*

LINDA: *It put everybody in a daze for the rest of their life. It'll never make sense.*

PAUL: *I still haven't taken it in. I don't want to.*

PLAYBOY: Yet the only thing you were quoted as saying after John's assassination was, "Well, it's a drag."

PAUL: *What happened was we heard the news that morning*

*and, strangely enough, all of us – the three Beatles, friends of John's – all of us reacted in the same way. Separately. Everyone just went to work that day. All of us. Nobody could stay home with that news. We all had to go to work and be with people we knew. Couldn't bear it. We just had to keep going. So I went in and did a day's work in a kind of shock. And as I was coming out of the studio later, there was a reporter, and as we were driving away, he just stuck the microphone in the window and shouted, "What do you think about John's death?" I had just finished a whole day in shock and I said, "It's a drag." I meant drag in the heaviest sense of the word, you know: "It's a – drag." But, you know, when you look at that in print, it says, "Yes, it's a drag." Matter of fact.*

PLAYBOY: You tend to give a lot of flip answers to questions, don't you?

PAUL: *I know what you mean. When my mum died, I said, "What are we going to do for money?"*

LINDA: *She brought in extra money for the family.*

PAUL: *And I've never forgiven myself for that. Really, deep down, you know, I never have quite forgiven myself for that. But that's all I could say then. It's like a lot of kids; when you tell them someone's died, they laugh.*

PLAYBOY: Because they can't cope with the emotion?

PAUL: *Yes. Exactly.*

LINDA: *With John's thing, what could you say?*

PAUL: *What could you say?*

LINDA: *The pain is beyond words. You can never describe it, I don't care how articulate you are.*

PAUL: *We just went home, we just looked at all the news on the telly, and we sat there with all the kids, just crying all evening. Just couldn't handle it, really.*

LINDA: *To this day, we just cry on hearing John's songs; you can't help it. You just cry. There aren't words… I'm going to cry now.*

PLAYBOY: Do you remember your last conversation with John?

PAUL: *Yes. That is a nice thing, a consoling factor for me, because I do feel it was sad that we never actually sat down and straightened our differences out. But fortunately for me, the last phone conversation I ever had with him was really great, and we didn't have any kind of blowup. It could have easily been one of the other phone calls, when we blew up at each other and slammed the phone down.*

PLAYBOY: Do you remember what you talked about?

PAUL: *It was just a very happy conversation about his family, my family. Enjoying his life very much; Sean was a very big part of it. And thinking about getting on with his career. I remember he said, "Oh, God, I'm like Aunt Mimi, padding round here in me dressing gown" – robe, as he called it, 'cause he was picking up the American vernacular – "feeding the cats in me robe and cooking and putting a cup of tea on. This housewife wants a career!" It was that time for him. He was about to launch Double Fantasy.*

PLAYBOY: But getting back to you and your flipness over John's death, isn't that characteristic of you–to show little emotion on the outside, to keep it all internalized?

LINDA: *You're right. That's true.*

PAUL: *True. My mum died when I was 14. That is a kind of*

*strange age to*
*lose a mother. “Cause, you know, you’re dealing with puberty –*

LINDA: *Gosh, we’ve got a 14-year-old right now!*

PAUL: *Yes, and for a boy to lose a mother –*

LINDA: *To have been through so many other growing pains, how can a body take all that and still continue?*

PAUL: *It’s not easy. You’re starting to be a man, to be macho. Actually, that was one of the things that brought John and me very close together: He lost his mum when he was 17. Our way of facing it at that age was to laugh at it -not in our hearts but on the surface. It was sort of a wink thing between us. When someone would say, “And how’s your mother?” John would say, “She died.” We’d know that that person would become incredibly embarrassed and we’d almost have a joke with it. After a few years, the pain subsided a bit. It was a bond between us, actually; quite a big one, as I recall. We came together professionally afterward. And as we became a writing team, I think it helped our intimacy and our trust in each other. Eventually, we were pretty good mates – until the Beatles started to split up and Yoko came into it.*

PLAYBOY: And that’s when all the feuding and name-calling began. What started it? Did you feel hurt by John?

PAUL: You conldn’t think of it as hurt. it was more like old army buddies’ splitting up on account of wedding bells. You know sings , “These wedding bells are breaking up that old gang of mine.” He’d fallen in love, and none of us was stupid enough to say, Oh, you shouldn’t love her.” We could recognize that, but that didn’t diminish the hurt we were feeling by being pushed aside. Later on, I remember saying, “Clear the decks, give him his time with Yoko.” I wanted him to have his child and more to

New York, to do all the things he'd wantedis child and more to New York, to do all the things he'd wanted to do, to learn Japanese, to expand himself.

PLAYBOY: But you didn't understand it at the time?

PAUL: No, at the time, we tried to understand. but what should happen was, if we were the least bit bitchy, that would be very hurtful to them in this–wild thing they were in. I was looking at my second solo album, Ram, the other day and I remember there was one tiny little reference to John in the whole thing. He'd been doing a lot of preaching, and it got up my nose a little bit. In one song, I wrote, "Too many people preaching practices," I think is the line. I mean, that was a little dig at John and Yoko. There wasn't anything else on it that was about them. Oh, there was "You took your lucky break and broke it in two."

LINDA: Same song. They got the message.

PAUL: But I think they took it further–

LINDA: They thought the whole album was about them. And then they got very upset.

PAUL: Yeah, that was the kind of thing that would happen. They'd take one small dig out of proportion and then come back at us in their next album. Then we'd say, "Hey, we only did two percent. they did 200 percent"–and we'd go through all of that insanity.

*"There are only four people who knew what the Beatles were about. Nobody else was in that car with us—just four of us in the back, laughing hysterically."*

*"The image we Americans had of the Beatles and their music was so positive and cheery, I never actually thought any problems could happen to these people."*

PLAYBOY: In most of his interviews, John said he never missed the
Beatles. Did you believe him?

PAUL: I don't know. My theory is that he didn't. Someone like John would want to end the Beatle period and start the Yoko period. And he wouldn't like either to interfere with the other. As he was with Yoko, anything about the Beatles tended inevitably to be an intrusion. So I think he was interested enough in his new life to genuinely not miss us.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever try to find out how he felt about it, about you?

PAUL: I knew there was the kind of support that I'd though he felt for me. But obviously, when you're getting slagged off in public, it shakes that faith. Nah, it's just John mouthing off. I know him. But, well, the name-calling coupled with the hurt–it became a bit of a number, you know?

PLAYBOY: Was the way you two went at each other good for the music?

PAUL: Yeah. This was one of the best things about Lennon and McCartney, the competitive element within the team. It was great. But hard to live with. It was hard to live with. It was probably one of the reasons why teams almost have to burn out. And, of course, in finding a strong woman like Yoko, John changed.

LINDA: But that way, you lose yourself.

PAUL: Yeah, I think that probably is the biggest criticism, that

John stopped being himself. I used to bitch at him for that. On the phone with me in the later years, he'd get very New York if we were arguing. New York accnt "Awright, goddamn it!" I called him Kojak once, because he was really laying New York street hip on me. Oh, come off it! But, through all of that, I do think he was always a man for fresh horizons. When he wanted to learn Japanese for Yoko, he went to the Biarritz.

LINDA: I like that! Biarritz! You mean Berlitz.

PAUL: Yeah, he wanted fresh challenges all the time. So it was nice of Yoko to fulfill that role. She gave him a direction.

Paul leaves to take a telephone call.

LINDA: I was just going to say that I think if John had lived, he might still be saying, "OH, I'm much happier now…."

PLAYBOY: And you don't believe it?

LINDA: The sad thing is that John and Paul both had problems and they loved each other and, boy, could they have helped each other! If they had only communicated! It frustrates me no end, because I was just some chick from New York when I walked into all of that. God, if I'd known what I know now… All I could do was sit there watching them play these games…

PLAYBOY: But wasn't it clear that John wanted only to work with Yoko?

LINDA: No. I know that Paul was desperate to write with John again. And I know John was desperate to write . . . desperate. People thought, Well, he's taking care of Sean, he's a househusband and all that, but he wasn't happy. He couldn't write and it drove him crazy. And Paul could have helped him– easily.

Paul returns.

PLAYBOY: Has the McCartneys' relationship with Yoko changed since John's
death?

LINDA: No comment! Only kidding. That's what she said.

PAUL: When someone asked Yoko if the Beatles had supported her after John's death, she said, "No comment."

LINDA: Even though Ringo flew over to see her and all of us called her.

PAUL: The thing is, in truth, I never really got on that well with Yoko anyway. It was John who got on well with her–that was John who got on well with her–that was the whole point. Strangely enough, I only started to get to know her after John's death. I began wanting to know if I could be of any help, because of my old friend. And at first, I was a bit put off by her attitude of "I don't want to be widow of the year." That's what she said. At first, I felt rebuffed and though, OH, well, great! Well, sod you! But then I thought, Wait a minute, come on. She's had the tragedy of a lifetime here, and I'm being crazy and insensitive to say, "Well, if you're not going to be nice to me, I'm not going to be nice to you." I feel I started to get to know her then, to understand what she was going through instead of only my point of view all the time–which I think is part of growing up anyway. And I think then I was able to find quite a lot of things in common with Yoko.

PLAYBOY: Such as?

PAUL: We're in similar positions–our fame and the people we know. . . .

LINDA: Yoko said to me when John was still alive, "We are the only people going through the same problems." But our

differences are still there, too. Being her business partner is a real problem.

*"I don't work at being ordinary. It's quite rational. It's not contrived at all. It is actually my answer to the question, What is the best way to be? I think ordinary."*

PLAYBOY: Once you began to understand Yoko, Paul, did you two talk about
John?

PAUL: Yes. We did. In fact, after he died, the thing that helped me the most, really, was talking to Yoko about it. She volunteered the information that he had… really liked me. She said that once or twice, they had sat down to listen to my records and he had said, "There you are." So an awful lot went on in the privacy of their own place. So, yes, it was very important.

PLAYBOY: How much did John's praise mean to you when he was alive?

PAUL: a lot, but I hardly ever remember it, actually. There wasn't a lot of it flying about! I remember one time when we were making Help! in Austria. We'd been out skiing all day for the film and so we were all tired. I usually shared a room with George. But on this particular occasion, I was in with John. We were

taking our huge skiing boots off and getting ready for the evening and stuff, and we had one of our cassettes. it was one of the albums, probably Revolver or Rubber Soul–I'm a bit hazy about which one. It may have been the one that had my song Here, There and Everywhere. There were three of my songs and three of John's songs on the side we were listening to. And for the first time ever, he just tossed it off, without saying anything definite, "Oh, I probably like your songs better than mine." And that was it! That was the height of praise I ever got off him. Mumbles "I probably like your songs better than mine." Whoops! There was no one looking, so he could say it.

But, yeah, I definitely did look up to John. We all looked up to John. He was older and he was very much the leader; he was the quickest wit and the smartest and all that kind of thing. So whenever he did praise any of us, it was great praise, indeed, because he didn't dish it out much. If ever you got a speck of it, a crumb of it, you were quite grateful. With Come Together, for instance, he wanted a piano lick to be very swampy and smoky, and I played it that way and he liked that a lot. I was quite pleased with that. He also liked it when I sang like Little Richard–Tutti-Frutti and all that. All my screaming songs, the early Beatles screaming stuff–that's me doing Little Richard. It requires a great deal of nerve to just jump up and scream like an . .. idiot, you know? Anyway, I would often fall a little bit short, not have that little kick, that soul, and it would be John who would go, "Come on! You can sing it better than that, man! Come on, come on! Really throw it!" All right, John, OK. . .. He was certainly the one I looked up to most–definitely.

PLAYBOY: Do you remember your first meeting with him? A picture in the Beatles biography The Long and Winding Road is supposed to be the earliest of you two together.

(Paul looks at a photo in book)

PAUL: That's my mate Len Garry and Pete Shotton. Haven't seen him for years. This was the original Quarrymen. John was playing ukulele chords taught to him by his mum and he was singing Come Go with Me, by the Del Vikings, but he was making up his own words because nobody knew the words in those days; nobody had the record: We'd only heard it on the radio and loved it. I met John that day. I knew the words to 25 rock songs, so I got in the group. Long Tall Sally and Tutti-Frutti, that got me in. That was my audition.

PLAYBOY: Did you know you were auditioning?

PAUL: No. I was just meeting them. I happened to sing a couple of songs backstage with them. I had a friend called Ivan Vaughn, who was my contact with all these guys; he was my schoolmate. A big, daft guy, like we all were. We all used to talk a lot of nonsense. I mean, our catchphrase is still Chrome Rock Navel.

PLAYBOY: What does that mean?

PAUL: I dunno. Sounds good, doesn't it? Scottish accent Chrome Rock Navel. Aye, all right, laddie! All our old letters say "From Chrome Rock Navel." John and all of us used to do all that stuff.

PLAYBOY: So you played with words from an early age?

PAUL: Yeah, you might call it sarcastic literary, because now everything is so much more important and serious, you know? but as kids on the streets, we just called it wisecracks. Sure, it was an ability with words. It became one of the Beatles' specialities. You know, where producer George Martin would say, "Anything you don't like." and we'd say, "We don't like your

tie.” That was George who actually said that. All those little famous Beatle wisecracks; we were all into the humour of the time–Peter Sellers and the Goons and forecasts: “Tomorrow will be
muggy, followed by tuggy, wuggy and thuggy!” He was about 12, a smart little kid. Another one was, “Yes, your Worship; yes, your battleship!” I remember that in a courtroom scene.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever envy his cleverness when you wrote together?

PAUL: No, not really. Just his repartee. I envied his repartee. But it wasn’t a question of envying each other. Each of us was as good as the other. We used to sag off school Play hooky. . We’d go to my house and try to learn to play songs. He had these banjo chords, I had half a guitar chord–and don’t forget, we started from exactly the same spot, Liverpool. Almost the same street, only a mile or two between us. Only a year and a half of age difference, knowledge of guitar, knowledge of music. Pretty similar. I had a little bit more knowledge of harmony through my dad. I actually knew what the word harmony meant. Laughter So, you know, we started from the same place and then went on the same railway journey together.

LINDA: It’s just the critics who say, “Well, John was the biting tongue; Paul’s the sentimental one.” John was biting, but he was also sentimental. Paul was sentimental, but he could be very biting. They were more similar than they were different.

PAUL: With me, how I wrote depended on my mood. The only way I would be sort of biting and witty like that was if I was in a bad mood! Laughter I was very good at sarcasm myself. I could really keep up with John then. If I was in a bad enough mood, I was right up there with him. We were terrific then. He could be

as wicked as he wanted, and I could be as wicked, too.

LINDA: But it is funny. I've often thought about how you two got your images. You're sort of the cute, soft one, and John was supposedly hard. But in truth, you could write Helter Skelter and he could write Goodnight and the songs on Abbey Road.

PAUL: Yes.

LINDA: A lot of songs that people thought you wrote, he probably wrote; and I'm sure there are a lot of songs people thought John wrote that were really written by you.

PAUL: That's right. It was more gray than anyone knew.

LINDA: Oh, absolutely!

PAUL: I mean, I saw a recent account that put George down for his contributions to the Beatles. But the real point is, there are only four people who knew what the Beatles were about anyway. Nobody else was in that car with us. The chauffeur's window was closed, and there were just four of us in the back of that car, laughing hysterically. We knew what we were laughing at; nobody else can ever know what it was about… I doubt if even we know, in truth.

PLAYBOY: Even now, do you feel defensive if someone attacks one of the four of you?

PAUL: Sure. I mean, you don't just dismiss George like that! There's a hell of a lot more to him than that! And Ringo. The truth of this kind of question depends on where you're looking: on the surface or below the surface. On the surface, Ringo was just some drummer. But there was a hell of a lot more to him than that. For instance, there wouldn't have been A Hard Day's Night without him. He had this kind of thing where he moved phrases around. My daughters have it, too. They just make up

better phrases. Some of my kids have got some brains. “First of a ball,” the girls say, instead of “First of all.” I like that, because lyricists play with words.

LINDA: Ringo also said, “Eight days a week.”

PAUL: Yeah, he said it as though he were an overworked chauffeur. In heavy accent “Eight days a week.” Laughter When we heard it, we said, “Really? Bing! Got it!” Laughs Another of his was “Tomorrow never knows.” He used to say, “Well, tomorrow never knows.” And he’d say it for real. He meant it. But all that sounds a bit trivial there. That wasn’t all he did. That was just the tip of the iceberg.

LINDA: But you said it. If only the four of you know, everybody else just makes theories. Just as people theorize about life. Who knows about life?

PLAYBOY: Then you agree that your whole was greater than the sum of its parts?

PAUL: Yeah. Yes. Definitely. Oh, yeah.

PLAYBOY: Most performers who have been part of a team continue to insist that their solo work is equal to their teamwork.

PAUL: When the four of us got together, we were definitely better than the four of us individually. One of the things we had going for us was that we’d been together a long time. It made us very tight, like family, almost, so we were able to read one another. That made us good. It was only really toward the very end, when business started to interfere. . . .

PLAYBOY: But to stay with the early days for a bit, did your father
object to your joining the group?

PAUL: He wanted me to have a career more than anything. “It’s

all very well to play in a group," he'd say, "but you have to have a trade to fall back on." That's what he used to say. He was just an average Jim, a cotton salesman, no great shakes; left school at 13 but was very intelligent. He used to do crosswords to increase his word power. He taught us an appreciation of common sense, which is what you found a lot of in Liverpool. I've been right around the world a few times, to all its little pockets; and, in truth, I'd swear to God I've never met any people more soulful, more intelligent, more kind, more filled with common sense than the people I came from in Liverpool. I'm not putting Linda's people down or anything like that

LINDA: No, of course not!

PAUL: But the type of people that I came from, I never saw better! In the whole of the world! I mean, the Presidents, the prime minister, I never met anyone half as nice as some of the people I know from Liverpool who are nothing, who do nothing. They're not important or famous. But they are smart, like my dad was smart. I mean, people who can just cut through problems like a hot knife through butter. The kind of people you need in life. Salt of the earth.

PLAYBOY: When you say something like that, people wonder if you're being insincere. You're a multimillionaire and world-famous, yet you work so hard at being ordinary, at preaching normalcy.

PAUL: No, I don't work at being ordinary People do say that: "Oh, he's down to earth, he's too good to be true. It can't be true!" And yet the fact is that being ordinary is very important to me. I see it in millions of other people. There's a new motorcycle champion who was just on the
telly. He's the same. He's not ordinary, he's a champion; but he

has ordinary values, he keeps those values. There's an appreciation of common sense. It's really quite rational, my ordinariness. It's not contrived at all. It is actually my answer to the question, What is the best way to be? I think ordinary.

LINDA: Well, it's fun.

PAUL: We can be really flash and have a Rolls-Royce for each finger, but I just don't get anything off that! There's nothing for me at all! It leaves me cold. Occasionally, I get a suit or some nice jacket or something, but I just cannot get into this stuff.

PLAYBOY: Surely, you wealth has had some impact on those ordinary values.

PAUL: Well, when you first get money, you buy all these things so no one thinks you're mean, and you spread it around. You get a chauffeur and you find yourself thrown around the back of this car and you think Goddamn it, I was happier when I had my own little car! I could drive myself! This is stupid! You find yourself trying to tune in a television in the back of this bloody thing, balancing a glass of champagne, and you think, This is hell! I hate this! You know, I've had more headaches off those tellies in the back of limousines. I just decided to give up all of that crap. I mean, it is just insane! I can't stand chauffeurs, people who live in. They take over your lives. I can't live like that.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel like that, too, Linda?

LINDA: I'm worse. I'm horrible. I cannot get happy from material things. They just upset me. When we were touring America, we stayed in a very lavish house that we rented, and I felt very empty and very lonely.

PAUL: Linda's naturally ordinary. It doesn't always come over

when she's talking to someone, being interviewed, but Linda's at her best when she's doing you a meal at home. That's when you see Linda. She cooks, she looks after the kids and she's there. We've got one cleaning lady; that's all we've got. If the kids are sick, there won't be a nurse looking after them; it will be Linda who is there. It's funny, actually, because I'm known as being stingy. When I take my kids to the seaside and they come up and say, "Dad, can we have some money to play on the machines?" I'll give them a reasonable amount of money, but I won't give them a lot. Linda's got tales of parents she knew in the States who used to pay their kids off–"Anything you want, kid." You know, $ 50 or anything. But the parents never looked after them. The money was their surrogate. It all makes me think, Sod it, I'll be the parent. I'll give them only as much as I figure they can handle.

PLAYBOY: That brings up an interesting question: Does too much emphasis on day-to-day life, on domesticity, dull the edge in a composer? It's commonly felt that your earlier stuff had more bite–and meat–than your more recent music.

PAUL: I can see that argument. I can see that if you have a domestic situation, let's say, it's less likely that you're going to hear a lot of new music throughout an evening–as apposed to when you're young and single and music is all you fill your time with. In my case, maybe the kids want to watch a TV show or I want to just sit or whatever. So I think a domestic situation can change you and your attitudes. I suppose if you did get a bit content, then you might not write savage lyrics and stuff. But I don't know. I don't really believe all that. I hate formulas of any kind.

PLAYBOY: Despite your own father's advice about getting a trade, it was he who encouraged you to play music. Did he ever

write music or lyrics himself?

PAUL: He wrote one song. He was in a band for quite a few years. It wasn't a very successful band. They used to have to change their name from gig to gig. They weren't invited back otherwise. But eventually, he became a bit of a pop star in his own right…. Strange we should be talking about it, because my brother's researched our early family history and asked all the aunties about what went on. He found a letter from a fella who said he used to be in love with my mum. It's a long story, but–to cut it short–he said that he had really fancied my mum, and he took her out for a long time. Then he suddenly twigged that she'd been getting him to take her around to dances, and he wondered why. They were going to joints, and she wasn't that kind of a girl. It turned out that that was where my father was playing! She was following him round, as a fan. It made me think, God, that's where I get it all from.

LINDA: You know, I didn't realize until now that he was as involved with music as he was.

PAUL: Which brings us back to your question. Did my dad ever write anything? Well, he used to have this one song, which he'd play over and over on the piano. It was just a tune; there were no words to it. I actually remember him, when I was a real little kid, saying, "Can anyone think of any words to this?" We all did try for a while; it was like a challenge. Well, years later, I recorded it with Chet Atkins and Floyd Cramer in Nashville. We called ourselves the Country Hams, and it was a song called Walking in the Park with Eloise. I told my dad, "You're going to get all the royalties. You wrote it and we're going to publish it for you and record it, so you'll get the checks." And he said, "I didn't write it, son." I thought, Oh, God, what? He said, "I made it up, but I didn't write it." He meant he couldn't notate; he couldn't

actually write the tune down. And, of course, that's like me. I can't write music. I just make 'em up, too.

PLAYBOY: Is "just making up" a song the thing that fulfills you most?

PAUL: Yes, nothing pleases me more than to go into a room and come out with a piece of music.

Paul leaves Linda and the interviewer alone.

LINDA: I'd love for Paul to compose more. All these business problems taking up his time! If he were only left to write great songs and play with good musicians! I think he has such soul for writing and is such a great singer… I don't think people realize what a great musician Paul is.

PLAYBOY: Most people probably do.

LINDA: You think so? I think they feel he's just a cute face. He's so good that I would really like to see him expand musically. That's what I see. It's this business stuff…. I hate business. Give me a lump of bread and a bit of lettuce in the garden, and forget the rest.

Paul returns.

PLAYBOY: Paul, when you and John were still hungry, you'd say to yourselves before composing a song, "Let's write a car. Let's write a house."

PAUL: Yeah. "Let's write a swimming pool."

PLAYBOY: What do you say now? Is there anything left for you to want? Isn't sommething important gone?

PAUL: Yes. I think greed is gone. You know, the hunger. You're right: It probably is good for a greyhound to be mean and toughened up. It will probably run faster.

LINDA: But Picasso wasn't hungry.

PAUL: Exactly. That's what I was saying about formulas. It's not always that important to be hungry, actually. I think it's just one of those artistic theories, as Linda says. Picasso wasn't hungry, and there are a lot of artists who haven't lost anything to domesticity. In my case, it probably did happen. When I was not at all domestic, and clubbing it and knocking around and boozing a lot and whatever in the Sixties, it probably did expose me to more and leave me with more needs to be fulfilled which you use songwriting for. Songwriting's like the thumb in the mouth. The more crises you have, the more material you have to work on, I suppose.

But then again, I don't know if it's true! I mean, we'd really have to decide which song we're going to pick on. If we're going to pick on Yesterday, well, let's see, I can't remember any crisis surrounding that one. So it may not be true at all. I think that I could easily turn around and be more content and have less edge and write something really great.

PLAYBOY: You're obviously ambivalent about the subject.

PAUL: For me, the truth of this domesticity thing is confused. In my case, it wasn't just domesticity that changed me. It was domesticity, plus the end of the Beatles. So you can see why I would begin to believe that domesticity equals lack of bite. I think it's actually lack of Beatles that equals lack of bite, rather than just domesticity. The lack of great sounding boards like John, Ringo, George to actually talk to about the music. Having three other major talents around… I think that had quite a bit to do with it.

PLAYBOY: You seem to be in a remarkably frank frame of mind. Even though it's the most thoroughly discussed breakup in

musical history, we don't think we've heard it straight from you, Paul: Did you or didn't you want the Beatles to continue?

PAUL: As far as I was concerned, yeah, I would have liked the Beatles never to have broken up. I wanted to get us back on the road doing small places, then move up to our previous form and then go and play. Just make music, and whatever else there was would be secondary. But it was John who didn't want to. He had told Allen Klein the new manager he and Yoko had picked late one night that he didn't want to continue.

LINDA: And Allen said to John, "Don't tell the others."… I don't know if we dare tell this.

PAUL: Yeah, I don't know how much of this we're allowed to say – but Allen said, "Don't tell them until after we sign your new Capitol Records deal."

LINDA: I don't know if we're allowed…

PAUL: It's the truth, folks.

LINDA: It's the truth.

PAUL: Even if it can't be said, we'll say it. It's the truth. So it was the very next morning that I was trying to say, "Let's get back together, guys, and play the small clubs and…" That's when John said…

LINDA: His exact words were "I think you're daft."

PAUL: And he said, "I wasn't going to tell you until after I signed the Capitol thing, but I'm leaving the group." And that was really it. The cat amongst the pigeons.

LINDA: But what also happened, after the shock wore off, was that everybody agreed to keep the decision to break up quiet.

PAUL: We weren't going to say anything about it for months, for

business reasons. But the really hurtful thing to me was that John was really not going to tell us. I think he was heavily under the influence of Allen Klein. And Klein, so I heard, had said to John – the first time anyone had said it – “What does Yoko want?” So since Yoko liked Klein because he was for giving Yoko anything she wanted, he was the man for John. That’s my theory on how it happened.

PLAYBOY: But it’s also been said that you got your revenge by giving out the news first, even though you’d all decided to sit on it for a while.

PAUL: Two or three months later, when I was about to release the solo album I’d been working on, one of my guys said to me, “What about the press?” All of us were still in shock over John’s news, and I said, “I can’t deal with the press; I hate all those Beatles questions.” So he said, “Then why don’t you just answer some questions from me and we’ll do a handout for the press.” I said fine. So he asked some stilted questions and I gave some stilted answers that included an announcement that we’d split up.

PLAYBOY: It still seems a bit calculated and cold on your part.

PAUL: It was going to be an insert in the album. But when it was printed as news, it looked very cold, yes, even crazy. Because it was just me answering a questionnaire. A bit weird. And, yes, John was hurt by that.

LINDA: Let me just say that John had made it clear that he wanted to be the one to announce the split, since it was his idea.

PAUL: He wanted to be first. But I didn’t realize it would hurt him that much or that it mattered who was first.

PLAYBOY: What John said later was that he found it hard to forgive you for using the split as a publicity stunt for your first solo record.

PAUL: I figured it was about time we told the truth. It was stupid, OK, but I thought someone ought to say something. I didn't like to keep lying to people. It was a conscience thing with me.

LINDA: It's madness, when you think of it – who got to tell first.

PLAYBOY: Aside from who did what, how did the breakup affect you emotionally?

PAUL: Truth is, I couldn't handle it for a while.

PLAYBOY: Why? Didn't you see it coming?

PAUL: I'd never actually gone that far in my own mind. Our manager, Neil Aspinall, had to read the official wording dissolving the partnership. He was supposed to say it aloud to us in a deadly serious voice and he
couldn't do it. He did a Nixon wobble. His voice went. And we were all suddenly aware of a sort of physical consequence of what had been going on. I thought, Oh, God, we really have broken up the Beatles. Oh, shit.

PLAYBOY: What happened then?

PAUL: Linda really had a tough time. I didn't make it easy for her.

LINDA: I was dreaming through the whole thing.

PAUL: I was impossible. I don't know how anyone could have lived with me. For the first time in my life, I was on the scrap heap, in my own eyes. An unemployed worker might have said, "Hey, you still have the money. That's not as bad as we have it." But to me, it didn't have anything to do with money. It was just

the feeling, the terrible disappointment of not being of any use to anyone anymore. It was a barreling, empty feeling that just rolled across my soul, and it was… I'd never experienced it before. Drugs had shown me little bits here and there – they had rolled across the carpet once or twice, but I had been able to get them out of my mind. In this case, the end of the Beatles, I really was done in for the first time in my life. Until then, I really was a kind of cocky sod. It was the first time I'd had a major blow to my confidence. When my mother died, I don't think my confidence suffered. It had been a terrible blow, but I didn't feel it was my fault. It was bad on Linda. She had to deal with this guy who didn't particularly want to get out of bed and, if he did, wanted to go back to bed pretty soon after. He wanted to drink earlier and earlier each day and didn't really see the point in shaving, because where was he going? And I was generally pretty morbid.

LINDA: Confidence is the word. It really shattered your confidence.

PAUL: There was no danger of suicide or anything; it wasn't that bad… Let's say I wouldn't have liked to live with me. So I don't know how Linda stuck it out.

PLAYBOY: How did you cope with him, Linda?

PAUL: Own up, now; come on, own up.

LINDA: It was frightening beyond belief. But I'm not a person who would give up. I wouldn't think, Oh, well, this is it. But it surprised me, because –

PAUL: Mind you, a lot of things were surprising you around that time.

LINDA: Oh, God! I was the most surprised person!

PAUL: She'd come over in the early days and see a photo of me up on my wall – a magazine cover or something – and she'd say, "Oh, God, I didn't think you'd even seen that."

LINDA: I thought the Beatles were above all that. They wouldn't look at their own press clippings, because they were such a buzz. I was surprised.

PAUL: But we were real. I, unfortunately, had to break that news to her.

LINDA: The image we Americans had of the Beatles and their music was so positive and cheery, pointing out that life is so ridiculous that we might as well laugh about it. But I never actually thought there were any problems that could happen to these people, these Beatles. So for me, the whole thing after the breakup was unreal. I was doing my little trip through life, you know: Here I am in England and oh, really? It was all happening so fast that I just kept going.

PLAYBOY: What made you pull yourself together, Paul, and form Wings?

PAUL: Just time, healing things. The shock of losing the Beatles as a band. . .. One of the main shocks was that I wouldn't have a band. I remember John's reaction was that, too. You know, "How am I going to get my songs out now?"

PLAYBOY: And Wings was the first step to recovery?

PAUL: Yeah. The answer to losing your job is, "Well, let's try to get another job." It's not a very satisfactory answer, but it's the only answer you've got. So we just started off thinking, We'll take any job; we'll do anything just to get going, to do something.

LINDA: Considering that you asked me to be in the group, you

really were willing to take anything.

PLAYBOY: Did you want to be in the group, Linda?

LINDA: Again, I didn't think about it. I never planned to be a photographer, either. I always thought I could do anything I liked doing. I'm not the type of person who thinks of the consequences beforehand.

PAUL: Which was a saving grace, really, because if she had thought about what would happen
LINDA: It would have made me too afraid.

PAUL: Anyway, it worked out fine, and eventually, bit by bit, we managed to put songs together. Those are the songs that some people thought were not as good as my earlier stuff, or too commercial. I know people from time to time used to say that, but my attitude was, "Sorry, folks, it's about the best I can do right now. Sorry! You know, this is me trying to do it. I'm trying to do it honestly and genuinely; if some of it's not working to your taste, what can I say?" But it helped us claw our way back.

PLAYBOY: What do you think of the Wings material, looking back on it? Is it music you're proud of?

PAUL: I used to think that all my Wings stuff was second-rate stuff, but I began to meet younger kids, not kids from my Beatle generation, who would seriously say, "No, wait a minute; can't have you say that about your work. We really love this song or that song."

LINDA: A lot of people come up to Paul and say, "Oh, my favorite song is such and such"–and it's one of the more recent ones.

PAUL: Yeah, there'll be people who mention My Love or Band on the Run, and for us that's a big thing. Or Mull of Kintyre or

Ebony and Ivory. No matter what I may think about them–I can view them cynically, even ruthlessly–even I have to admit there definitely was something there with some of the Wings songs. In fact, the more I bother looking at it again, the more I discover what I was trying to do. I think there'll be a lot of that Wings stuff sort of rediscovered in years to come.

PLAYBOY: Some of the criticism of the Wings material undoubtedly stemmed from the fact that you had Linda in the band. How did you react to the criticism of her?

PAUL: Well, we laid ourselves open to that kind of criticism. But it was out of complete innocence that I got Wings together and naively said, "Come on, Lin, do you want to be in it?" I showed her middle C, told her I'd teach her a few chords and have a few laughs. It was very much in that vein. But then people began to say, "My God! He's got his wife up there onstage–he's got to be kidding!" And so forth. I think she came to handle it amazingly well. She has fabulous showbiz instincts, and by the time it came to the 1976 tour of the States, she was handling an audience better than any of us. But looking back on it, I can understand the criticism. It was as if we were putting her up there to top the Beatles or something. There was never any thought of that. If we were doing it again, we just might be more thoughtful. But I'm proud of her; I really threw her in the deep end.

Paul is called away.

PLAYBOY: Linda, what was the Wings period really like for Paul?

LINDA: I think Paul felt very frustrated. He wanted it to work with Wings, but we just picked the wrong people. He needed the best to work with, but he had to carry almost all the weight.

PLAYBOY: Former members of Wings have written some pretty nasty stuff about both of you–in particular, that Paul was dictatorial to work with.

LINDA: It's part of the same problem. Paul is such a good musician, and none of the Wings were good enough to play with him–including me, for sure. They were good, not great. But on this film Give My Regards to Broad Street , he's had a chance to work with the best.

As for all the other stuff that's been written about the two of us, so much of it is rubbish. Former Wings guitar player Denny Laine wrote two articles: One said I led Paul around totally, the other that Paul totally dominated me. I thought Denny came off badly. I could see some girlfriend or an ex-chauffeur writing such rubbish, but a musician?

PLAYBOY: He was less then charitable about your musical contributions to the group.

LINDA: Look, this acting-and-singing thing is not–I'm not really a talent in those fields. I was just telling Paul again that I don't quite know how I had the nerve to join him, looking back on it now. I mean, how do you go out with Beethoven and say, "Sure, I'll sing harmong with you" when you've never sung a note? Or "Sure I'll play piano with you" when you've nev er played? It was mad. But I'm . . . enthusiastic about things. Isn't it funny? People write that I'm cold and pushy. I hop I'm not, but I have that kind of face–I don't smile a lot. The truth is, I'm an old softy. I don't say to a kid, "No, you mustn't do that!" I'm the person who puts her arm around him. I'm easy. I go along with things.

I think my problem is that I Married Paul and to this day, nobody knows what or who I am. I don't even know what or who I am. Being married to Paul makes me a personality, I guess, but if I

weren't, I would have meandered through life. I quite like meandering. I'm curious and I like to try things I haven't tried before, like music. I was that way before I married Paul. I get excited about a stained glass I've never seen before, or a great sunset–very physically excited!

PLAYBOY: Why do you think you have the reputation you do? You share that with Yoko Ono–somehow being the cause of the Beatles' breakup.

LINDA: If only I'd known that you have to explain things to people! When I married Paul, I knew I'd never had these problems . . . except maybe when I was at school . . . but then it was all right because you just listened to the radio and you'd forget it. But God knows, people got on my back, and for things I wasn't really doing. But I'm just not the type who'll get up and explain herself. It'll just go down that I'm that woman. . . .

People I used to know say I'm a snob now–you know, "She didn't speak to me." And people say–as they did on Good Morning America once–that if I weren't married to Paul McCartney, I wouldn't be a photographer. Well, maybe I wouldn't be a famous photographer, but I'd be a photographer. I'd make a living. . . . All those things get to you, but I can handle it. . . . I can just wipe it out. I don't dwell on what people say about me. I actually dwell more on what people say about Paul, for some reason. Maybe it's because he can't handle it.

PLAYBOY: How do you handle it when a book portrays you as a groupie and describes intimate scenes of Paul's escapades and John's so-called homosexual encounter with Beatles manager Brain Epstein? That was what Peter Brown, who ran Apple the Beatles' record company , wrote about in The Love You Make.

LINDA: (Pauses) He was a friend. He was the one who

introduced Paul and me. A man I trusted. When I was going to the hospital to have Stella, I handed him my baby, Mary, to hold. I wouldn't trust my baby to anyone but a friend. Now it's like he doesn't exist. And his book–well, it doesn't matter what he wrote, because he betrayed a trust. We decided not ot read it, but we heard things. We put the copy he sent us in the fire and I photographed it as it burned, page by page. As to what he wrote about Paul or about John's experiences, ask Paul himself. He's coming back.

Paul rejoins the conversation.

PLAYBOY: We were talking about what Peter Brown wrote in his book.

PAUL: Yeah, he told us he was going to write about the music of the Sixties, not a book about the Beatles. I took him into my house, something we don't do; we had lunch, showed him the kids, showed him around our village. I actually thought he was a friend. so to find out that he isn't is no big deal. But I–I mean, I hear he said John Lennon had a gay thing with Brian Epstein when they went to Spain together once. That's been rumored for years. I mean, was he in the room with them? It's probably just wishful thinking on his part. But I'll tell you what's naughty about it–that John's not here to answer it, and neither is Brian. All that stuff that's written about us, I just hope that people who've sort of heard of our music, vaguely, know what the Beatles, or the ex-Beatles, were–and it wasn't what's been written. I mean, John's time and effort were, in the main, spent on pretty honorable stuff. As for the other side, well, nobody's perfect, nobody's Jesus. And look what they did to him.

PLAYBOY: John apparently coped with the craziness of that period by experimenting with heroin. Did you know anything

about that?

PAUL: No, not at the time. It's strange; that was all in private.

LINDA: I don't think we really knew what they were up to.

PAUL: We certainly never saw them on heroin. Never, ever.

LINDA: It must have been when Yoko was around.

PAUL: Yeah. My theory is that John and Yoko were so much in love that they began adding wildness to ordinary love, going for it in a big way. From what they told us–from what we found out–it did include crazy things like heroin. It appeared to include everything and anything. I mean, if the dare was to go naked, they would go naked. If the dare was to try heroin–nothing was too much. To think of yourself as Jesus Christ was not blasphemous, it was all just larger than life. All sorts of stuff was going on. Everybody was talking about expanding your mind.

PLAYBOY: And you never took heroin yourself?

PAUL: No.

PLAYBOY: But, to say the least, you're no stranger to other drugs?

Paul: I've never wanted to be seen talking about marijuana for publication. Why? Because I've got four kids and it looks like I'm advocating it. I'm not. But after this last bust in Barbados, with people saying, "Naughty boy, shouldn't do that!" as a 42-year-old man, I feel I now have the right to reply. IF anyone had told me in the Sixties that 20 years later we'd still be talking about whether pot was worse than this or that, I'd have said, "Oh, come off it, boys." If you start the most-dangerous list with heroin or morphine–we know there's no way out of that; you've got to be suicidal to get into that in any form–then I think marijuana comes toward the bottom of the list. Cocaine is above

marijuana in harmfulness. I used to do coke mincing his words , but it got too fashionable, to fashionable, darling, amongst the record execs. I couldn't handle all that, being in the bogs bathrooms with all those creeps! And I do genuinely believe that Librium and Valium would both be above marijuana. For me, pot is milder than Scotch. That doesn't mean I've turned around and advocated marijuana. I haven't. I'm really only saying this is true for me. I mean, in Barbados, where I was on holiday, I was in a room miles away from anyone. It never interfered with anyone. No one was watching me except one manservant at the place.

I also want to say that there are things that marijuana is more harmful than: air, for instance. I advocate air every day. Water, orange juice–I'd advocate that and a good vegetarian diet any day of the week. But as I say, in print, you're put in a corner; they make you sound like the bloody high priest of pot. It's stupid, you know. I can take pot or leave it. I got busted in Japan for it. I was nine days without it and there wasn't a hint of withdrawal, nothing.

PLAYBOY: You haven't discussed your imprisonment in Japan for pot possession. What was it like?

PAUL: It was hell. But I only remember the good bits. Like a bad holiday. The ting is, my arrest was on every bloody TV set. The other prisoners all knew who I was and asked me to sing. I didn't have any instruments, but the world's press would have loved to have had cameras rolling as I was going drums with hands . Well, I'd seen Bridge on the River Kwai; I knew what you had to do when you were a prisoner of war! You had to laugh a lot and keep cheery and keep yourself up, 'cause that's all you had. So I did a lot of that.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you write a 20,000-word account of your stay

in prison?

PAUL: After it, yeah. I wrote it in case anybody ever asked, “What was that like?” because, like I say, all the good bits have surfaced. But if I think hard, I can remember that the first thing I expected was rape. That was my big fear. Right? Wouldn’t that be yours? So I slept with me back to the wall. I didn’t know what was going to happen, you know? Japanese accent “Hello, is you friendly jailer. I’d like a favor, please.” “No! Not even for a bowl of rice!” I slept for about a week in the green suit I was arrested in; I didn’t know you could ask for fresh clothes.

PLAYBOY: What was that period like for you, Linda?

LINDA: Total misery. The kids and I were in a Japanese hotel, not knowing what was going to happen. I was so frightened for Paul I can’t even describe it. Your imagination takes off. I didn’t know that they would be doing to him. And for what? A bit of nothing. Marijuana isn’t like bombs or murder or the Mafia. I don’t think pot is a sin, but I didn’t want us to be a martyr for it.

PLAYBOY: Your legal problems with pot are one thing, but the legal affairs surrounding Apple, to wind up the Beatles’ financial affairs, are in another dimension. Will your former business ever be settled?

LINDA: What do you want? It’s only been 15 years. Laughter

PAUL: To most clear-minded people, it’s obvious we should have settled the Beatles’ affairs by now–for our own sanity. But there have been many stumbling blocks over the years. There was the occasion when John came to a meeting and asked for a 1,000,000 pounds loan. That made us stumble! Everyone went, “Say what?!” and jaws dropped and the meeting was canceled. Then there was the time when we had all arrived for the big dissolution meeting in the Plaza Hotel in New York. There were

green-baize tables–like the Geneva Conference it was–with millions of documents laid out for us to sign. George had just come off tour, I'd flown in specially from England, Ringo had flown in specially, too, I think, and. . . John wouldn't show up! He wouldn't come from across the park! George got on the phone, yelled, "Take those fucking shades off and come over here, you!" John still wouldn't come over. He had a balloon delivered with a sign saying, LISTEN TO THIS BALLOON. It was all quite far out.

LINDA: The numbers weren't right, the planets weren't right, and John wasn't coming. Well! And it's never happened since. It's never happened. He said he was not coming and that was it. Had we known there was some guy flipping cards on his bed to help him make his decision, we would have all gone over there. George blew his top, but it didn't change anything. It's beyond words. It's mind-boggling.

PAUL: There were many stumbling blocks, and to keep the record straight, it wasn't always John and Yoko. Obviously, they accused my side of doing plenty of stumbling, too. We've all accused one another of various business things; we tend to be pretty paranoid by now, as you can imagine. There's a lot of money involved.

PLAYBOY: With all these stories about numbers and cards, you seem to be saying it's Yoko who has kept this from being settled.

LINDA: I don't know abot that. It is true she settled with Klein for 5,000,000. It wasn't her money, really. Each Beatle gave a share, Paul included, and he never wanted that man as manager in the first place. Five or six million! When you think that they were pulling bloody cards to see what they would do! If

only we had known what they were doing back there! We tried reason and reason didn't exist. All I know is, with all the advisors and lawyers and parasites, we're putting a lot of kids through prep school and buying a lot of swimming pools. And all Paul has been saying all this time is, "Divide it four ways, please." Instead of it staying in one kitty, where only the lawyers make money, divide it four ways and let's get on with life! I said to Paul I wouldn't mind if we didn't get anything, as long as it gets divided, just to get rid of the aggro. Just so the lawyers will stop making money. I don't care if we don't get any. But I hate being the fool.

PLAYBOY: Fortunately for you, most of your income comes not from Apple but, actually, from your music-publishing company, right?

PAUL: That and my recording. About equal. The music publishing I own is fabulous recording. About equal. The music publishing I own is fabulous. Beautiful. I owe it all to Linda's dad Lee Eastman and her brother John. Linda's dad is a great business brain. He said originally, "If you are going to invest, do it in something you know. If you invest in building computers or something, you can lose a fortune. Wouldn't you rather be in music? Stay in music." I said, "Yeah, I'd much rather do that." So he asked me what kind of music I liked. And the first name I said was Buddy Holly. Lee got on to the man who owned Buddy Holly's stuff and bought that for me. So I was into publishing now. The strange thing is, we never owned our own publishing; it was always getting bought and sold. Someone else owns Yesterday, not me. So it is a kind of compensation, really, for that.

Lee found this company called Edwin H. Morris, in New York, which owned everything, including the kitchen sink–it's just the

most wonderful company ever. It has some of the best music ever written, songs that my dad would play, like Tenderly, After You've Gone, Stormy Weather. And our luck! There's a thing in the business they call "Eastman luck," or maybe a little McCartney luck thrown in, too, but we just suddenly got very, very lucky. There was a show that needed investors and Lee said, "Do you want to let the show run or should we can it? We have the power to can it." I said, "No, keep it going–it's an artistic venture, we don't want to can that." It was Annie. It was at a small theater before it got to Broadway, a little show, and we published the music. A Chorus Line happened, too, and we published that. La Cage aux Folles has happened since, and that's been lunatic, insane. Many, many more. Grease, too. John Travolta was looking for something to do, and we owned the publishing rights to that.

PLAYBOY: It had nothing to do with your understanding of popular music?

PAUL: A bit. I was vibing it heavily. And very in love with it, and that helps. Anyway, now it's become the largest independently owned publishing company, so it's a big dip.

PLAYBOY: It's also made you one of the richest men in the world, hasn't it?

LINDA: There aren't all those millions that you read about in the paper. How much Paul earns is one of those constant topics in the gossip columns, and it's all exaggerated.

PLAYBOY: The figure we've heard most often is that you're worth about 500,000,000.

PAUL: And the other one is that I earn 20,000,000 a year.

LINDA: Can you imagine the taxes you'd have to pay on that?

PAUL: The money stories actually arose because some fellow somewhere wrote a book called World Paychecks: Who Makes What, Where and Why–a rubbishy book from which the newspapers quoted a reference to me. That is the entire source this wealth has come from.

LINDA: And it doubles every time you look at the paper.

PAUL: It's all based on that one published item, and it actually isn't true. I didn't earn that much in record royalties. You've only got to look at my sales in 1980 to figure that one out. In the here-and-now stage, the figure is wildly exaggerated.

Linda: That's it. That's all you need to say.

PLAYBOY: All right, but when you say "in the here-and-now stage," you seem to be hedging; does that mean that iths possible you might be earning that much in the future?

PAUL: No, I'm not talking figures. Where I come from, you don't really talk about how much you're earning. Those things are private. Like a lot of people, my dad never told my mum how much he was earning. I'm certainly not going to tell the world. I'm doing well.

PLAYBOY: Does Linda Know?

PAUL: Linda knows.

LINDA: I'm not really interested. I want to have enough to live on, and if I can help a few other people, that's what I care about.

PLAYBOY: One other rumor: Is it true, as published, that you are the single largest depositor in the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York?

PAUL, UNDA: We don't even use Chase Manhattan Bank!

PLAYBOY: Whatever else you say, people have always felt you

are commercially minded, that you are motivated by money–

PAUL: No, it isn't money. It's doing well. I saw that Meryl Streep said, "I just want to do my job well." And really, that's all I'm ever trying to do. I still like writing songs. It still gives me a thrill. If I had been asked at 15 why I wrote, I would have answered, "Money." But after a while, you realize that's not really your driving motive. When you get the money, you still need to keep going; you don't stop. There has to be something else. I think it's the freedom to do what you want and to live your dreams.

PLAYBOY: One of the last things John Lennon agreed to do for PLAYBOY was to run through his songs and share his memories of them. Even if we don't have the time to go through all your music, Paul, would you tell us what you remember about some of your Beatles songs?

PAUL: OK, but it'll just be off the top of my head.

PLAYBOY: Understood. What do you remember about one of your earliest songs, Love Me Do?

PAUL: Love Me Do–the first song we recorded, like, for real. First serious audition. I was very nervous, I remember. John was supposed to sing the lead, but they changed their minds and asked me to sing lead at the last minute, because they wanted John to play harmonica. Until then, we hadn't rehearsed with a harmonica; George Martin started arranging it on the spot. It was very nerve-racking.

PLAYBOY: Do You Want to Know a Secret?

PAUL: Nothing much; a song we really wrote for George to sing. Before he wrote his own stuff, John and I wrote things for him and Ringo to do.

PLAYBOY: All My Loving.

PAUL: Yeah, I wrote that one. It was the first song I ever wrote where I had the words before the music. I wrote the words on a bus on tour, then we got the tune when I arrived there. The first time I've ever worked upside down.

PLAYBOY: I Wanna Be Your Man.

PAUL: I wrote it for Ringo to do on one of the early albums. But we ended up giving it to the Stones. We met Mick and Keith in a taxi one day in Charing Cross Road and Mick said, "Have you got any songs?" So we said, "Well, we just happen to have one with us!" I think George had been instrumental in getting them their first record contract. We suggested them to Decca, 'cause Decca had blown it by refusing us, so they had tried to save face by asking George, "Know any other groups?" He said, "Well, there is this group called the Stones." So that's how they got their first contract. Anyway, John and I gave them maybe not their first record, but I think the first they got on the charts with. They don't tell anybody about it these days; they prefer to be more ethnic. But you and I know the real truth.

PLAYBOY: What about Not a Second Time?

PAUL: Influenced by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles.

PLAYBOY: Please Mr. Postman.

PAUL: Influenced by the Marvelettes, who did the original version. We got it from our fans, who would write PLEASE MR. POSTMAN on the back of the envelopes. "Posty, posty, don't be slow, be like the Beatles and go, man, go!" That sort of stuff.

PLAYBOY: I Should Have Known Better.

PAUL: You should have studied before you took this Interview! I Should Have Known Better was one of John's; it was in Hard Day's Night.

PLAYBOY: If I Fell.

PAUL: This was our close-harmony period. We did a few songs–This Boy, If I Fell, Yes It Is–in the same vein, which were kind of like the Fourmost an English vocal group , only not really. . . .

PLAYBOY: So you took things from other groups; you heard what other pop groups were doing

PAUL: Oh, yeah. We were the biggest nickers in town. Plagiarists extraordinaires.

PLAYBOY: And I Love Her. Was that written for anybody?

PAUL: It's just a love song; no, it wasn't for anyone. Having the title start in midsentence, I thought that was clever. Well, Perry Como did And I Love You So, many years later. Tried to nick the idea. I like that–it was a nice tune, that one. I still like it.

PLAYBOY: Can't Buy Me Love.

PAUL: We recorded it in France, as I recall. Went over to the Odeon in Paris. Recorded it over there. Felt pround because Ella Fitzgerald recorded it, too, though we didn't realize what it meant that she was doing it.

PLAYBOY: Help!

PAUL: John wrote that–well, John and I wrote it at his house in Weybridge for the film. I think the title w it at his house in Weybridge for the film. I think the title was out of desperation.

PLAYBOY: You've Got to Hide Your Love Away.

PAUL: That was John doing a Dylan–heavily influenced by Bob. If you listen, he's singing it like Bob.

PLAYBOY: Nowhere Man.

PAUL: That was John after a night out, with dawn coming up. I think at that point in his life, he was a bit . . . wondering where

he was going.

PLAYBOY: In My Life.

PAUL: I think I wrote the tune to that; that's the one we slightly dispute. John either forgot or didn't think I wrote the tune. I remember he had the words, like a poem–sort of about faces he remember…. I recall going off for half an hour and sitting with a Mellotron he had, writing the tune. Which was Miracles inspired, as I remember. In fact, a lot of stuff was then.

PLAYBOY: Taxman.

PAUL: George wrote that and I played guitar on it. He wrote it in anger at finding out what the taxman did. He had never known before then what could happen to your money.

PLAYBOY: Eleanor Rigby.

PAUL: I wrote that. I got the name Rigby from a shop in Bristol. I was wandering round Bristol one day and saw a shop called Rigby.. And I think Eleanor was from Eleanor Bron, the actress we worked with in the film Hep! . But I just liked the name. I was looking for a name that sounded natural. Eleanor Rigby sounded natural.

PLAYBOY: Here, There and Everywhere.

PAUL: I wrote that by John's pool one day.

PLAYBOY: Did you write a lot of your stuff at John's house in that period?

PAUL: Some of it. When we were working together, sometimes he came in to see me. But mainly, I went out to see him.

PLAYBOY: Of the songs you composed on your own, Yesterday is obviously your greatest hit. Where did Yesterday come from?

PAUL: It fell out of bed. I had a piano by my bedside and I . . .

must have dreamed it, because I tumbled out of bed and put my hands on the piano keys and I had a tune in my head. It was just all there, a complete thing. I couldn't believe it. It came too easy. In fact, I didn't believe I'd written it. I thought maybe I'd heard it before, it was some other tune, and I went around for weeks playing the chords of the song for people, asking them, "Is this like something? I think I've written it." And people would say, "No, it's not like anything else, but it's good."

I don't believe in magic as far as that kind of thing is concerned. I'm not into "Hey, what's your sign?" or any of that. But, I mean, magic as in "Where did you come from? How did you become the successful sperm out of 300,000,000?"–that's magic I believe in. I don't know how I got here, and I don't know how I write songs. I don't know why I breathe. God, magic, wonder. It just is. I love that kind of thought: All the information for a tree was in an acorn–the tree was somehow in there…

PLAYBOY: All right, from the sublime to the . . . less sublime: How about Yellow Submarine?

PAUL: I wrote that in bed one night. As a kid's story. And then we thought it would be good for Ringo to do.

PLAYBOY: Good Day Sunshine.

PAUL: Wrote that out at John's one day–the sun was shining. Influenced by the Lovin' Spoonful.

PLAYBOY: When you wrote, did you have difficulty deciding who would play what and who would sing what? Or did you just agree you would sing your own songs?

PAUL: Normally, you just sang your own songs, and you played whatever you wrote.

PLAYBOY: For No One.

PAUL: I wrote that on a skiing holiday in Switzerland. In a hired chalet amongst the snow.

PLAYBOY: Got to Get You into My Life.

PAUL: That's mine; I wrote it. It was the first one we used brass on, Ithink. One of the first times we used soul trumpets.

PLAYBOY: Tomorrow Never Knows.

PAUL: That was one of Ringo's malapropisms. John wrote the lyrics from Timothy Leary's version of the Tibetan Book of the Dead. It was a kind of Bible for all the psychedelic freaks. that was an LSD song. Probably the only one. People always thought Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds was, but it actually wasn't meant to say LSD. It was a drawing that John's son brought home from school. Lucy was a kid in his school. And we said, "That's a great title," and we wrote the psychedelic song based on it. It's a natural, isn't it? You know, it was that sort of time. Like all that Abbey Road cover stuff, you know. Paul is dead, because he hasn't got shoes on, you know? It was a period when they used to read into our lyrics a lot, used to think there was more in them than there was. We didn't bother pointing out.. . .

PLAYBOY: Did your taking LSD make any difference in your writing?

PAUL: I suppose it did, yeah. I suppose everything makes some kind of difference. It was a psychedelic period then, so we were into that kind of thing. But . . . we didn't work with LSD–ever.

PLAYBOY: Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.

PAUL: It was an idea I had, I think, when I was flying from L.A. to somewhere. I thought it would be nice to lose our identities, to submerge ourselves in the persona of a fake group. We would

make up all the culture around it and collect all our heroes in one place. So I thought, A typical stupid-sounding name for a Dr. Hook's Medicine Show and Traveling Circus kind of thing would be Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. Just a word game, really.

PLAYBOY: Getting Better.

PAUL: Wrote that at my house in St. Johns Wood. All I remember is that I said, "It's getting better all the time," and John contributed the legendary line "It couldn't get much worse." Which I thought was very good. Against the spirit of that song, which was all superoptimistic–then there's that lovely little sardonic line. Typical John.

PLAYBOY: Fixing a Hole.

PAUL: Yeah, I wrote that. I liked that one. Strange story, though. The night we went to record that, a guy turned up at my house who announced himself as Jesus. So I took him to the session. You know, couldn't harm, I thought. Introduced Jesus to the guys. Quite reasonable about it. But that was it. Last we ever saw of Jesus.

PLAYBOY: She's Leaving Home.

PAUL: I wrote that. My kind of ballad from that period. My daughter likes that one. One of my daughters likes that. Still works. The other thing I remember is that George Martin was offended that I used another arranger. He was busy and I was itching to get on with it; I was inspired. I think George had a lot of difficulty forgiving me for that. It hurt him; I didn't mean to.

PLAYBOY: Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite!

PAUL: That was taken directly off a poster John had. A circus poster. We stretched it a bit.

PLAYBOY: What about When I'm Sixty-Four?

PAUL: Who knows? Yeah, I wrote the tune when I was about 15, I think, on the piano at home, before I moved from Liverpool. It was kind of a cabaret tune. Then, years later, I put words to it.

PLAYBOY: In his Playboy Interview, John said that was a song he didn't like and never could have written.

PAUL: Who knows what John liked? You know, John would say he didn't like one thing one minute and the next he might like it. I don't really know what he liked or didn't like, you know! It would depend on what mood he was in on a given day, really, what he would like. . . . I don't care; I liked it!

PLAYBOY: What about Lovely Rita?

PAUL: Yeah, that was mine. It was based on the American meter maid. And I got the idea to just–you know, so many of my things, like When I'm Sixty-Four and those, they're tongue in cheek! But they get taken for real! Sarcastic "Paul is saying, 'Will you love me when I'm 64?'!" But I say, "Will you still feed me when I'm 64?" That's the tongue-in-cheek bit. And similarly with Lovely Rita–the idea of a parking-meter attendant's being sexy was tongue in cheek at the time. Although I've seen a few around, come to think of it. . . .

PLAYBOY: You're licking your chops.

PAUL: Well, this is PLAYBOY talk!

PLAYBOY: Right. Good Morning Good Morning.

PAUL: Good Morning–John's. That was our first major use of sound effects, I think. We had horses and chickens and dogs and all sorts running through it.

PLAYBOY: A Day in the Life–John's, of course. Right?

PAUL: That was mainly John's, I think. I remember being very conscious of the words "I'd love to turn you on" and thinking, Well, that's about as risque as we dare get at this point. Well, the BBC banned it. It said, "Now they know how many holes it takes to fill the Albert Hall" or something. But I mean that there was nothing vaguely rude or naughtly in any of that. "I'd love to turn you on" was the rudest line in the whole thing. But that was one of John's very good ones. I wrote . . . that was co-written. The orchestra crescendo and that was based on some of the ideas I'd been getting from Stockhausen and people like that, which is more abstract. So we told the orchestra members to just start on their lowest note and end on their highest note and go in their own time–which orchestras are frightened to do. That's not the tradition. But we got 'em to do it. Actually, we got the trumpets to start on the lowest note, and the violins started a little later; violins tend to follow one another, they're like sheep. Trumpets are a bit more adventurous; they're drunk! Trumpeters are generally drunk. It wets their whistle.

PLAYBOY: Back in the U.S.S.R.

PAUL: I wrote that as a kind of Beach Boys parody. And Back in the U.S.A. was a Chuck Berry song, so it kinda took off from there. I just liked the idea of Georgia girls and talking about places like the Ukraine as if they were California, you know? It was also hands across the water, which I'm still conscious of. 'Cause they like us out there, even though the bosses in the Krelmin may not. The kids do. And that to me is very important for the future of the race.

PLAYBOY: Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da.

PAUL: A fella who used to hang around the clubs used to say Jamaican accent , "OB-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on," and he got

annoyed when I did a song of it, 'cause he wanted a cut. I said, "Come on, Jimmy, it's just an expression.

If you'd written the song, you could have had to cut." He also used to say, "Nothin's too much, just outa sight." He was just one of those guys who had great expressions, you know.

PLAYBOY: It's pretty clear how much you like to work off other people. It's as if you need someone else to be fully creative with. True?

PAUL: Well. . . .

PLAYBOY: For instance, earlier you said you really missed those three sounding boards, John, Ringo and George. Whom can you use today as sounding boards?

PAUL: My kids. I'll play some new tune on the piano. If it's real good, "I'll notice the kids will pick up on it and start humming it. I remember, when I wrote So Bad, the lyric was "Girl, I love you / Girl, I love you," which I sang for my little girls–and they sang it back. Then my little boy, James, who is six, looked at us doing this, and I began singing the lyric as "Boy, I love you / Boy, I love you"–I didn't want to leave my boy out of a love song!

PLAYBOY: What about the other singer/composers with whom you're collaborated? How are they as sounding boards?

PAUL: You mean Stevie Wonder and Michael Jacksons? I loved working with them. I admire their voices and their talent. But it wasn't what I'd call serious collaboration; it was more like we were singing on one another's records. Michael and I happened to write a couple of songs together. But we never actually sat down and thought, We're now a songwriting team. I think Michael and I both treated it as a kind of . . . just a nice thing to do. He started out ringing me up and saying he wanted to see

me. So I said to him, “What’s all this for?” you know? Like, why? It was all very nice, but . . . he said, “I wanna make hits.” I said, “Great, lovely.” So I don’t take that kind of thing that seriously.

PLAYBOY: Do you take Michael Jackson seriously as a songwriter?

PAUL: No, I don’t particularly admire him as a writer, because he hasn’t done much. I admire Stevie Wonder more. And Stephen Sondheim. Probably one of the best.

PLAYBOY: Sondheim? You mean as in Broadway musicals?

PAUL: Sure. You know, when we started with the Lennon-McCartney thing, you know, 50-50 with a handshake, it was like a Rodgers and Hammerstein trip. For me it was, anyway. That romantic image of collaboration, all those films about. New York songwriters plugging away at the piano–“We’ll call it Alligator Symphomy; what a great idea!”–and they all go to California and get drunk. That always appealed to me, that image. Lennon and McCartney were to become the Rodgers and Hammerstein of the Sixties; that’s the way that dream went.

PLAYBOY: Then is there a part of you that’s still looking for a new partner- someone you can write with the way you did with John?

PAUL: I’m not looking. . . . I’m not, because I didn’t look for John, either. But I think if I happened to fall into a situation where I felt comfortable writing with someone, I definitely wouldn’t say no to it.

I like collaboration, but the collaboration I had with John–it’s difficult to imaging anyone else coming up to that standard. Because he was no slouch, that boy. . . . He was pretty hot stuff, you know. I mean, I can’t imagine anybody being there when I

go sings : “It’s getting better all the time.” I just can’t imagine anybody who could chime in sings : “It couldn’t get much worse.”

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